PUBLIC OPINION

IN HUNGARY ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

The UN Department of Public Information commissioned a public opinion poll in Hungary to assess the awareness, knowledge and image of the UN. The poll was carried out during October-November 1990.

■ THE RESULTS IN BRIEF

- Over ninety per cent of Hungarians know about the United Nations; almost one half of those polled are able to name a UN-related agency.
- A majority of Hungarians believe the Organization is doing a good job.
- Most of them are interested in learning more about United Nations activities; their greatest interest is in children's issues.

AWARENESS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

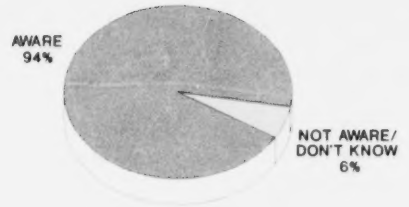

FIGURE 1

AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE UN

Ninety-four per cent of Hungarians have heard of the United Nations. The highest awareness (100 per cent) was among high income earners as well as among those with advance education. Those between the ages of 25 and 39 were also more likely to know about the UN.

Well over two fifths (46 per cent) of all Hungarians could name a UN agency or body. At least 15 per cent of those polled mentioned WHO, UNICEF, Security Council, UNESCO and FAO. The General Assembly, IMF, and World Bank were each mentioned by five per cent. Two per cent erroneously thought the Red Cross is a UN-related agency.

UNITED NATIONS ISSUE NO.14—MARCH 1991

ABILITY TO NAME A UN INSTITUTION

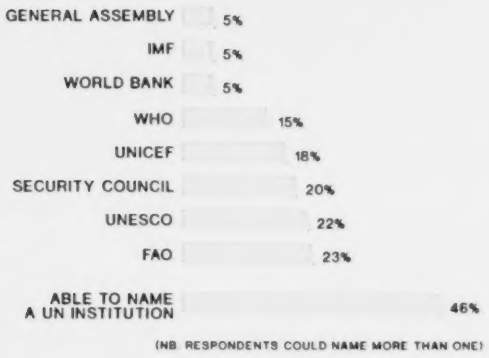

FIGURE 2

IDENTIFYING THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

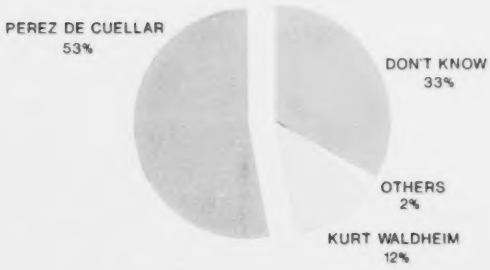

FIGURE 3

UN PERFORMANCE RATING

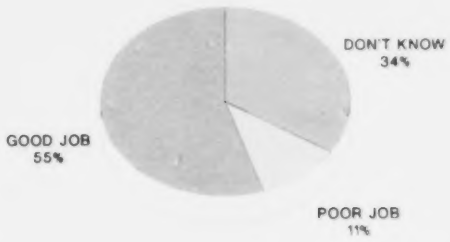

FIGURE 4

Meanwhile, several other UN institutions were each named by less than two per cent of those polled.

In general, the most knowledgeable about the UN tended to be professionals and students. The least knowledgeable were older people.

IDENTIFICATION OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL

Fifty-three per cent of Hungarians knew enough about the United Nations to be able to identify Javier Pérez de Cuéllar as its current Secretary-General. He was most known among college students (86 per cent). Twelve per cent of all Hungarians thought Kurt Waldheim was still the UN Secretary-General. All other previous Secretaries-General were identified by less than three per cent of those surveyed. A third of them could not identify any of the names.

RATING UN PERFORMANCE

Most Hungarians have a positive outlook on the United Nations. Fifty-five per cent of those surveyed said the Organization was performing well compared to eleven per cent who said it was not. A third did not venture an opinion about the Organization's work.

In general, almost all population groups were more positive than negative about UN performance. The ability to express an opinion about the Organization's work increased with the level of education. People in the higher income brackets and professionals were critical of the Organization.

REASONS FOR UN PERFORMANCE RATING

A majority of those who believed the UN was doing a good job said it was successful in managing regional political crises. The UN's mediating role in the Iran-Iraq conflict as well as in the recent Gulf crisis were cited as an example.

A quarter of those who rated UN performance positively specifically cited UN initiatives in maintaining world peace. Other fields of UN success in the opinion of those polled, were economic aid and disaster relief efforts, human rights, and social development.

The relatively few who were critical of the Organization's work said the UN has no executive authority and that it was influenced too much by the superpowers. Most of the negative comments were more general than specific.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Most Hungarians cited television as the main source of information on the UN. Other sources mentioned were radio, newspapers, magazines and books. All other sources scored two per cent or less. Television as a prime source of news is used more by high income earners and university students than other socio-demographic groups.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON THE UN

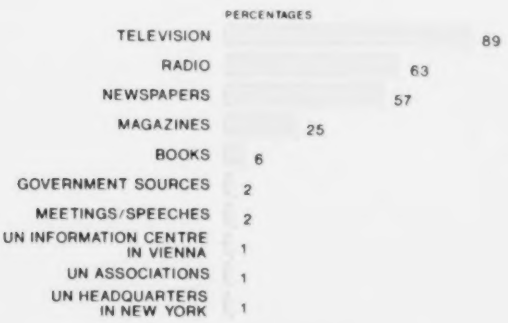

FIGURE 5

TEACHING ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS

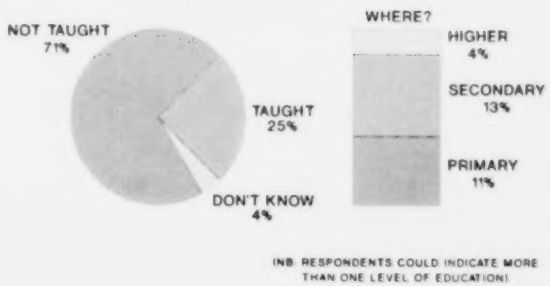

FIGURE 6

Approximately a third of all Hungarians said they had been taught about the UN at school. Overall, 71 per cent of all Hungarians were not taught about the UN.

INTEREST IN UN ISSUES

A majority of Hungarians expressed interest in UN activities dealing with children's issues, international peace and security, human rights, economic development, crime prevention and environmental protection. In general, Hungarians assign low priority to issues such as apartheid in South Africa, decolonization and African economic recovery.

INTEREST IN UNITED NATIONS ISSUES

	VERY INTERESTED %	SOMEWHAT INTERESTED %	NOT INTERESTED %
CHILDREN'S ISSUES	69	21	4
HUMAN RIGHTS	65	26	4
INT'L PEACE & SECURITY	65	26	4
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	65	25	4
CRIME PREVENTION	64	25	7
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION	60	30	6
DISARMAMENT	57	29	8
TRADE & DEVELOPMENT	53	33	8
WORLD FOOD PROBLEMS	46	42	7
INT'L DEBT CRISIS	44	35	15
IMPROVING HOUSING CONDITIONS	43	36	16
DRUG ABUSE	43	31	21
AIDS	42	33	19
RACIAL DISCRIMINATION	38	39	17
REFUGEES & DISASTER RELIEF	35	46	14
EQUAL RIGHTS FOR WOMEN	31	41	23
INT'L LAW & TREATIES	25	40	24
THE WORK OF THE UN IN GENERAL	23	55	14
NEW WORLD INFORMATION ORDER	21	40	23
POPULATION ISSUES	20	48	24
APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA	18	40	34
DECOLONIZATION	16	36	38
AFRICAN ECONOMIC RECOVERY	7	37	49

(NB: SOME RESPONDENTS INDICATED "DON'T KNOW" OR GAVE NO ANSWER TO SOME OF THE ISSUES)

FIGURE 7

HOW THE POLL WAS DONE

The poll was conducted in Hungary by MODUS: Business and Social Marketing Consulting, Ltd. of Budapest. They interviewed a nationwide representative sample of 989 men and women aged 15 and over. The interviews were carried out face-to-face in respondents' homes during October-November 1990. The margin of sampling error is estimated at ±3 per cent.

The Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit of the United Nations Department of Public Information undertakes public opinion polls to "analyse trends of public opinion throughout the world about the activities of the United Nations and the extent to which an informed understanding of the work of the United Nations is being secured". General Assembly resolution 13(1), paragraph 13, Annex 1 of 13 February 1946.

CONCLUSION

A plurality of Hungarians appear to be quite knowledgeable of the United Nations and its related agencies. Their general outlook on the Organization is quite positive and a majority of them express interest in most of the issues dealt with by the UN.

For more information, contact the Programme Evaluation and Communications Research Unit,
Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017
Phone (212) 963-6872, Fax (212) 963-4361

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DPI/1128—40277—March 1991—2M